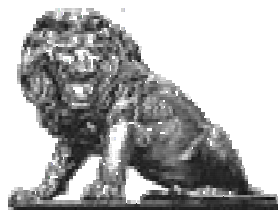# SURVEY OF SERVICES TO CHILDREN IN SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Summary Report By Jane G. Connor
Youth Services Consultant

South Carolina State Library

2003

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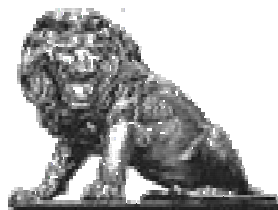# SURVEY OF SERVICES TO CHILDREN IN SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC LIBRARIES 2001

Summary Report by Jane G. Connor,
Youth Services Consultant

This survey was conducted using the attached form in the spring of 2001.

(Note: For the purpose of this report Chapin Memorial Library, the state's only independent public library, will be treated as a library system, except where noted.)

Introduction

Services to children are a high priority in public library service. In recent years children's librarians have become increasingly involved in outreach and partnerships with other organizations serving children. This has increased the library's visibility in the community and brought a wider recognition of the library's role in early childhood and youth development and education.

The last survey of public library services to children was done in 1992. The first survey was done in 1979, and the second in 1988. Since the 1992 survey, library service to youth has been greatly impacted by the use of computers, the Internet and databases, and by the increased attention given to early childhood development, and educational achievement.

Statistics about services to children are included in the State Library's *Annual Statistical Summary*. However, this survey focuses on how children's service operates in various libraries, including looking at staffing resources, priorities, and services.

South Carolina's Children

It is useful to begin by looking at some basic statistical information about children in South Carolina. According to the 2000 United States Census, there are 1,135,778 children and youth ages 0-19 in South Carolina.

Children in South Carolina

Age of Children	# in South Carolina
Under 5 years	264,679
5 to 9 years	285,243
10 to 14 years	290,479
15 to 19 years	295,377

64.4 percent of the children under 18 are white, and 32 percent are African American. 3.6% of the population are children of other races (Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, or other or multiple races). The charts below provide more detailed information about the ethnic makeup of South Carolina's children.

2000 Census Data—Race Profile for South Carolina

Source: Kids Count Data online: http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/census/
Based on statistics from U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census Summary File 1

Age Group	Total	White	African American	Am. Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian	Pacific Islander	Some other race	Two or More races
Under 18	1, 009,641 100%	598,18 8 59.2 %	369,514 36.6%	3,754 .4%	8,528 .8%	410 0%	11,923 1.2%	17,324 1.7%
Under 5 years	264,679 27%	159,61 9 61%	90,782 35%	996 .4%	2,499 .9%	122 .05%	4,182 1.6%	6,479 3.2%
5 to 9 years	285,243 29%	167,54 6 59%	106,110 37%	1,007 .4%	2,296 .8	115 .04%	3,265 1.1%	4,904 1.7%
10 to 14 years	290,479 29%	171,13 0 59%	109,453 38%	1,058 .4%	2,265 .8%	110 .1%	2,558 .9%	3,905 1.4%
15 to 17 years	169,240 17%	99,803 59%	63,169 37%	693 .4%	1,468 .9%	63 .1%	1,468 .9%	2,036 1.2%

Note: Hispanics, who can be of any race, are included in the racial figures here. See separate chart below for more detail on the Hispanic child population.

2000 Census Data – Hispanic Origin Profile for South Carolina

Source: Kids Count Data online: http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/census/ Based on statistics from U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census Summary File 1

Age Group	Total	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
Population under age 18	1,009,641	27,954 (2.8%)	981,687
Under 5 years	264,679	9,512 (3.6%)	255.167
5 to 9 years	285,243	7,634 (2.7%)	277,609
10 to 14 years	290,479	6,328 (2.2%)	284,151
15 to 17 years	169,240	4,480 (2.7%)	164,760

Kids Count also reports that children represent a shrinking portion of South Carolina's population. Those under 18 were 24.7% of the population in 1999, down from 41.7% in 1960, 36.9% in 1970 and 30.2% in 1980.

Children's Services Staff

The responsibilities of head of children's services vary across the state.

Task	YES	NO	No Reply	Comments
Selection of print materials for children	29	12		
Main library only	5			
System-wide	21			Shares with professional branch staff; branch staff does own selection with input from children's librarian; With input of (4)collection development department(2),works with YS selection committee. In some libraries, director oversees and gives final approval
No response			13	
Selection of non-print materials for children	29	11	1	Shared among 3 librarians; done by AV librarian; with director approval
Maintenance of children's Collections	30	8	2	Coordinator helps with branch weeding; shares with 2 other staff; works with selection committee/ collection development committee
Coordinate group programs for children	39	1		
Main library	11		5	
System-wide				Only coordinates system-wide activities
Orientation/ training for children's librarians	27	5	4	Responsibility shared with department and branch managers; not successful—scheduling problems; done informally
Main library	12			
System-wide	13			
Publicity / promotion	35	4		
Main library	12			
System-wide	21			

Children are considered an important audience for service in public libraries. Every library system except one has staff other than the director designated for service to children. The exception is a rural three-county system where branch staff provide services to children. Thirty-one of the libraries reported that the head of children's services serves as a coordinator of services to children throughout the service area. Of the nine who do not, four have no branches, one has only one very small branch, and another is the library without a staff member designated for children's services. In all but three libraries, the director supervises the head of children's services. In two of the largest libraries, the

head of children's services reports to the deputy director or head of the main library. Thirty-two libraries reported that the head of children's services is a department head or part of the administrative team. Five are not, and in three small library systems, this question is not applicable. Some of the administrative activities include overall planning (34), goal setting (33) and policy development (32)

One library reported that it plans to divide the headquarters and branch coordinator's position within the next year.

Twenty-eight library systems said that they have a long-range plan for service to children and families. This plan can be part of the library's overall long-range plan. Twelve do not do any long-range planning for services to children and families.

The majority of public libraries in South Carolina require a Master's Degree in Library Science (M.L.S.) for the head of children's services. Twenty-four require a M.L.S. degree in library science, thirteen require a bachelor's degree, and two require a high school diploma. The number requiring the M.L.S. degree increased by six (33%) since the 1992 survey. Sixteen require a Bachelor's degree, an increase of one since 1992. In two libraries, the children's librarian has a high school diploma, down from six in 1992. This demonstrates a steady increase in academic qualifications for children's librarian's positions.
*(See chart on page 5)*

There has been an increase in the number of all M.L.S.- degreed staff serving children. The distance education option from the School of Library and Information Science at the University of South Carolina has contributed to this growth by making it easier for persons, including existing staff, to earn the professional degree without having to be on campus for all classes.

Highest Academic Degree of Children's Services Staff
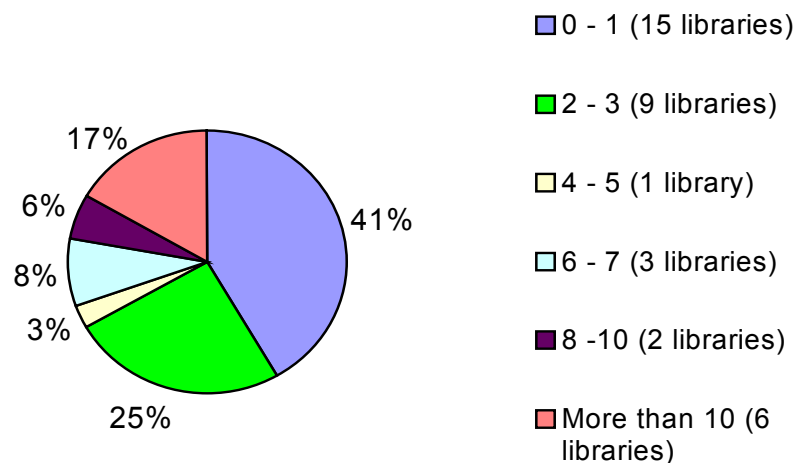## in South Carolina Public Libraries

Library Name	# staff with M.L.S. degree	# staff with Bachelor's degree	# staff with high school diploma
ABBE	2	2	5
AHJ	0	0	0
Anderson	1	3	3
Beaufort	2.5	25	0
Berkeley	1	0	0
Calhoun	0	1	0
Chapin Mem.	1	0	1
Charleston	11	5	6
Cherokee	0	1	0
Chester	0	1	0
Chesterfield	0	1	0
Clarendon	0	1	0
Colleton	1	0	0
Darlington	1	1	0
Dillon	0	1	2
Dorchester	1	3	0
Fairfield	0	1	0
Florence	1	3	3
Georgetown	0	3	0
Greenville	6	2	2.5
Abbeville-Greenwood	1	3	1
Horry	1	3	6
Kershaw	1	1	0
Lancaster	1	0	0
Laurens	0	1	1
Lee	0	1	0
Lexington	4	7	1
McCormick	0	0	0
Marion	1	0	1
Marlboro	0	0	1
Newberry	0	1	0
Oconee	1	0	0
Orangeburg	0	1	3
Pickens	1	0	1
Richland	18	23	9
Saluda	0	0	1
Spartanburg	3	8	4
Sumter	1	3	1
Union	1	0	0
Williamsburg	0	1	0
York	3	11	1

There is also a wide variation in salaries. More often than not, this is related to the size of the library and the requirements for the position. The fact that more than half of the public libraries pay their head of children's services less than $30,000 a year is consistent with the low salaries in general in many public libraries in South Carolina. Since twenty-four libraries require a master's degree, this means that in 2001, at least eight degreed librarians were making less than $30,000.

Salaries of Head of Children's Services

- Less than $20,000
- $20,000 - $30,000
- $30,000 - $40,000
- $40,000 - $50,000
- More than $50,000
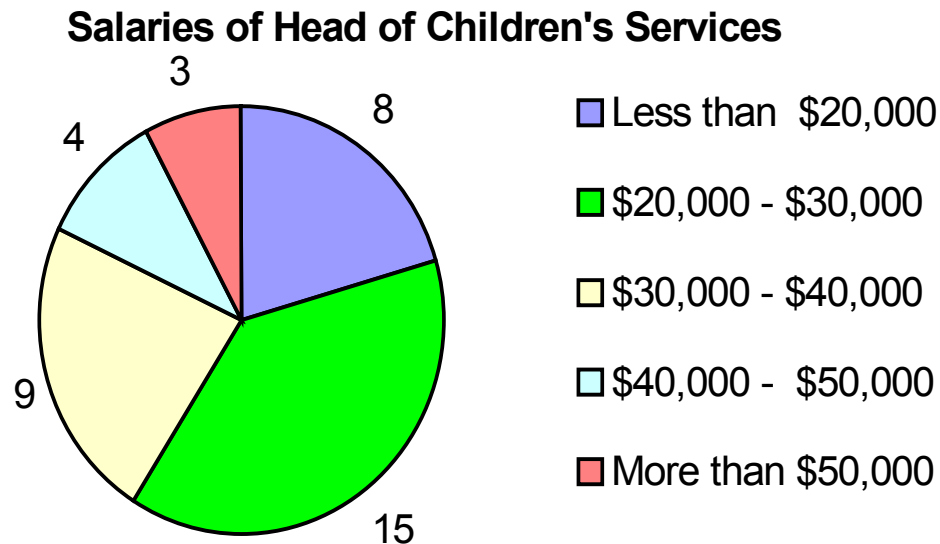
As libraries have grown and programs expanded, many libraries have added additional staff to work with children. The number of staff members providing service to children varies widely.

Number of Children's Services Staff in Public Libraries

- 0 - 1 (15 libraries)
- 2 - 3 (9 libraries)
- 4 - 5 (1 library)
- 6 - 7 (3 libraries)
- 8 -10 (2 libraries)
- More than 10 (6 libraries)

.
There are eighty-three people working full-time and thirty-five part-time in children's services in main libraries in South Carolina. There are seventy-four staff members who work full-time in branches. Sixty-nine percent of these are in the Richland and Charleston County Libraries. Twenty-six people work part-time in public library branches. Five libraries have a total of thirteen full-time staff, and 2.2 part-time staff are working to provide outreach services. Six of the full-time and two of the part-time staff reported operate Spartanburg County Library's Storytime van program.

Staff size in children's services is also related to the size of libraries, and the number of larger libraries with six or more staff for children's services and those with multiple children's librarians in branches, reflects the increase of large full-service branches in larger systems. At the other end of the spectrum, most of the libraries with only one person providing services to children have more than one building. This means that the staff member is going regularly to branches to provide programming, that branch staff is responsible for programming in the branch, or that there is little programming in branches. In eighteen library systems, the children's department at the main library provides programming in branches. In nine library systems, branch staff does the children's programming, and in two libraries, it is done by a combination of branch and headquarters staff.

Impact of Technology on Services to Children

One thing that almost every library agreed upon was the significant change computers and the Internet has brought to public libraries. Most responses generalized the question about the impact of the Internet to include all computer use. It is clear from the large number of responses about the time spent troubleshooting, logging people on and off, monitoring use, and assisting users, that computers and especially the Internet, have made a significant impact on how staff time is used. Technology has added stress as well as work to the daily workload. In a time of financial constraint, few libraries have been able to add the staff needed to meet all the demands of technology and maintain other services.

Librarians pointed out the importance of training, including training on the DISCUS databases, and the need for all staff to be computer literate. Several libraries have Internet only in the adult/reference area, which relieves the children's librarian of the daily responsibility, but also reduces contact with the children and the opportunity to link them with print resources at their level.

Although some libraries did point out the benefits of computers and the Internet, the most frequent response was that they had added to the workload. Those who mentioned the benefits said that the Internet has given children increased access to information, especially in areas such as geography, current biography, and events. Online resources can decrease the time necessary for searching out answers and information. One library reported that it works with child care centers

to provide educational websites and another that it finds the Internet useful in developing programs. Computer technology has also brought more new people into the library. Hopefully, in the future, the benefits will clearly outweigh the challenges the new technology presents.

Another question asked if the head of children's services was involved in decisions about hardware, software and policies related to computers and technology. Twenty libraries said yes, eighteen said no, and two said the question did not apply to their situation.

RESOURCES

Books and Periodicals

This section of the survey asked how the collection was selected, what the collection is like, and how it is maintained.

Responsibility for selection of materials for the main library most often rests with the children's librarian(s) although six libraries indicated that selection was the responsibility of the library director. Two others assigned selection of children's materials to other staff. In 18 libraries, the children's librarian also selects children's materials for branches and bookmobile (if they have a separate collection). In eight libraries, the branch staff does the selection, and in five libraries, selection is done by the director and other staff.

The amount of money spent on children's books and non-print materials varies widely due to size of library and number of outlets. It is more revealing to look at the percentage of the total library materials budget spent on children's materials and on the percentage spent on books and on non-print materials.

The percentage of the materials budget spent on children's materials ranges from five percent to forty-five percent, a surprisingly wide range. It is generally recommended that purchases of materials for children be between 20 and 30 percent of the materials budget. Collection needs, such as condition and currency of the collection, impact on budget needs. In addition, statistics such as percentage of total circulation that is children's material and amount of outreach services may also impact on the percentage of the materials budget allocated for children's services. The percentage of the collection that is non-print—books on tape, music tapes and CD's, videotapes/DVD's—also varies widely from .1 percent to 41.9 percent.

Most children's book selectors continue to rely heavily on review periodicals although they are making increased use of book distributor bibliographies and online sources. *Booklist*(34)*, Horn Book Magazine*(20)*, School Library Journal*(18), and *Kirkus*(14) are the most heavily used selection tools. *Book Links*, used by 12 libraries, focuses on subject approaches to books and has many topical

bibliographies, which children's librarians are using as a selection tool. Eleven libraries also use *Publisher's Weekly*, which is helpful in alerting librarians about books that will be heavily promoted. Also heavily used are national award lists as well as the South Carolina Association of School Librarians' Book Award Lists.

Among the non-library periodical sources, six or more libraries listed *Children's Catalog*, publisher's catalogs, patron requests, and school district reading lists.

The survey also asked what percentage of materials purchased are selected from reviews. The response showed that most staff rely quite heavily on reviews.
Over time, selection from reviews generally results in a higher quality collection because someone is basing an evaluation on reading and thinking about an item's strengths and weaknesses as a whole. Few people have the time to make an assessment of a book's overall quality from examining it. When a book gets positive reviews, the library staff knows it is a good title, but then must decide if a recommended book is needed for the library's collection.

The number of children's periodical subscriptions libraries receive ranges from zero to sixty-nine, which is related to the size of the library. Many libraries find that children are less interested in reading magazines or checking them out.

Number of Children's Periodicals
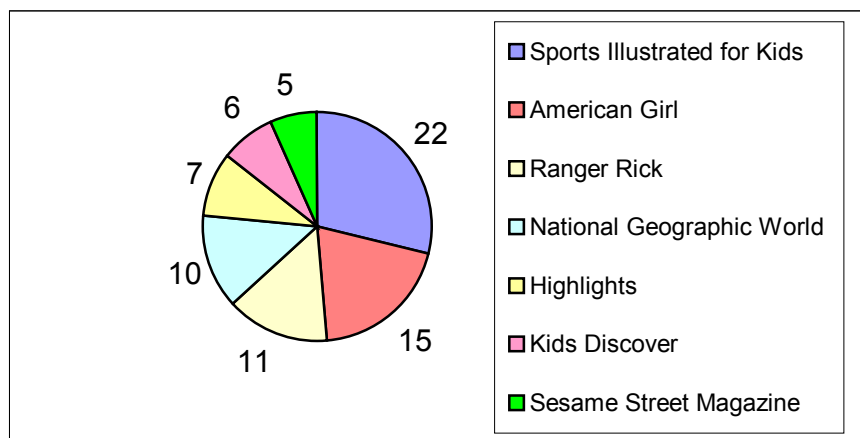
The most popular magazines for children in public libraries are listed on the next chart. Popularity was judged by being listed among the three most popular magazines in a library.

Most Popular Magazines for Children in Public Libraries

Title of Magazine	Number of Libraries
Sports Illustrated for Kids	22
American Girl	15
Ranger Rick	11
National Geographic World	10
Highlights	7
Kids Discover	6

Twenty-one other magazines were cited but mentioned by less than four libraries.

Electronic Resources

The growth in availability and use of electronic resources, including databases and the Internet, is the most dramatic change in the ten years since the last survey. The use of computer-based resources is having major effects on how children and adults search for information, both in and outside the library and is having effects on staffing needs, collection development and management, and library use.

In responding to questions about DISCUS, a number of responses included the Internet as well as the database resources. Eight libraries said the availability of electronic resources resulted in a decrease in purchases of reference books for children, while nine said it has had little or no impact, and three said it had marginal impact on children's book selection. While some libraries said that children want to use electronic resources first, others said children and parents still like a book to take home. A couple of libraries pointed out that there is less need to have so many books on school report topics and that they are less concerned with buying as much of material that dates quickly, particularly for branches.

Electronic information is impacting how books are selected in some libraries. Six libraries reported using online reviews and bibliographies in selecting materials, and one commented that staff now can see what a book looks like before ordering it. For children, an unattractive book has a real impact on use. Availability of information online also means libraries can cut back on duplicates in nonfiction on school report topics. The impact of electronic resources on both use and collections will surely increase in the next decade.

Thirty-four libraries said that staff members working with children know how to use the DISCUS resources for elementary and middle school children. Three said they did not. However, they also said that staff did not use DISCUS as much as they could even though they were aware of it. On the other hand, thirty-eight libraries felt staff would benefit from training in using DISCUS resources with focus on the

products designed for use by children. One library commented that the comfort level with DISCUS varied among the library's branches. Another said that it found that elementary age children lacked the skill and patience to use databases and preferred the familiarity of a search engine. This is also shown by responses to a question about frequency of staff and children's use. While only three libraries reported that they always use DISCUS, twenty-seven said they used it sometimes and eight said it was used rarely. The reasons for this are varied. Some children and parents want a book they can take home. Computer terminals may not always be available. Two libraries pointed out that children must be led to DISCUS, and that staff must take the lead in encouraging its use.

Libraries were asked to rank by frequency of use the types of resources used most frequently by children.

## Children's Use of Various Types of Resources
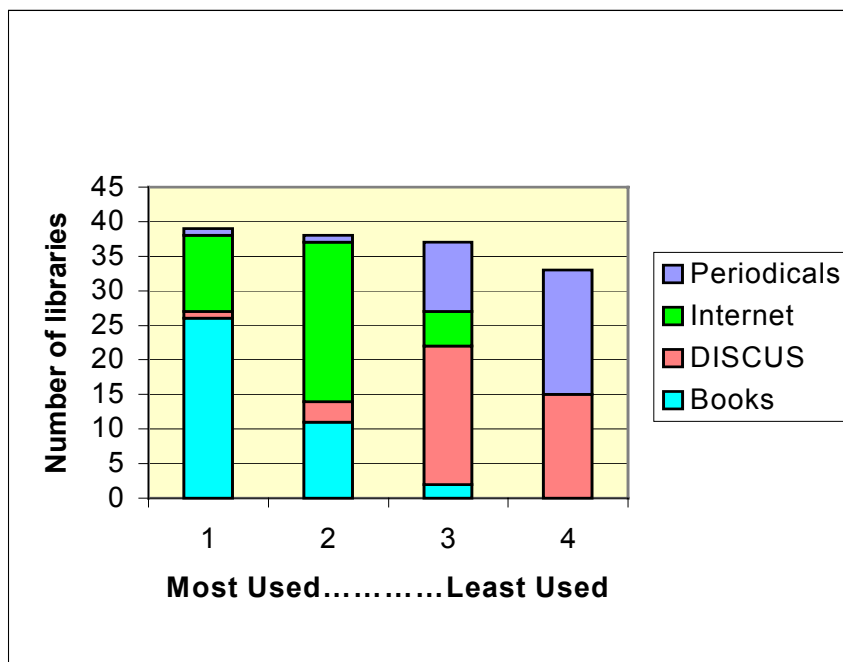
This chart clearly shows that in 2001, books were still the most frequently used resource with the Internet a strong second. In many libraries, DISCUS was the third or fourth choice in terms of use. Periodicals have never been used much as a research resource by elementary aged children, and the survey confirms this.

Librarians working with children promote awareness of DISCUS in a variety of ways. Not surprisingly, librarian suggestion and children receiving personal

assistance from a staff member were the most used methods. Children often need the connection with a person to use a new or unfamiliar tool, and while the DISCUS databases for kids are relatively easy to use, many children will require assistance at least the first time they use it. This is the age group that may find it most difficult to understand that DISCUS is different from the Internet.

Promoting Use of DISCUS
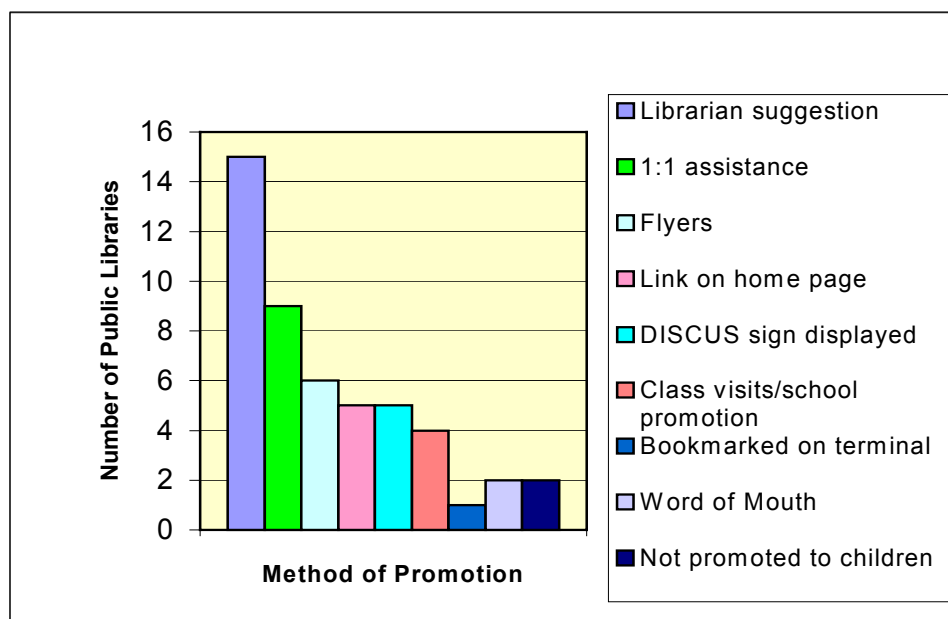
Services

Another section of the survey dealt with services. The first several questions dealt with public library policies and children, such as obtaining library cards, fines, and borrowing restrictions. Each public library sets its own age requirements for getting a library card. In South Carolina over 62.5 percent of libraries have no age requirements so that even babies can have a library card.

Age Requirements For Getting A Library Card
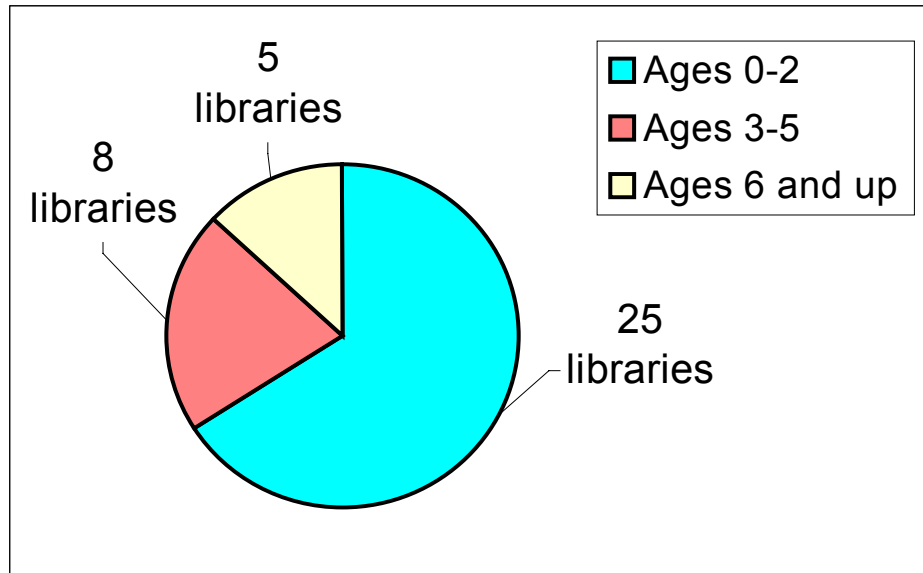
All but one library charges overdue fines on children's materials, and the fine is same as for adult materials. All libraries allow children to borrow materials from the adult collection although seven libraries restrict children from borrowing videos from the adult collection. The following chart shows other services offered at libraries.

The next chart shows that comparable services are offered to adults and children in most libraries. It used to be that many libraries did not interlibrary loan materials for children, but most libraries do this now.

0ther Services Offered at Public Libraries
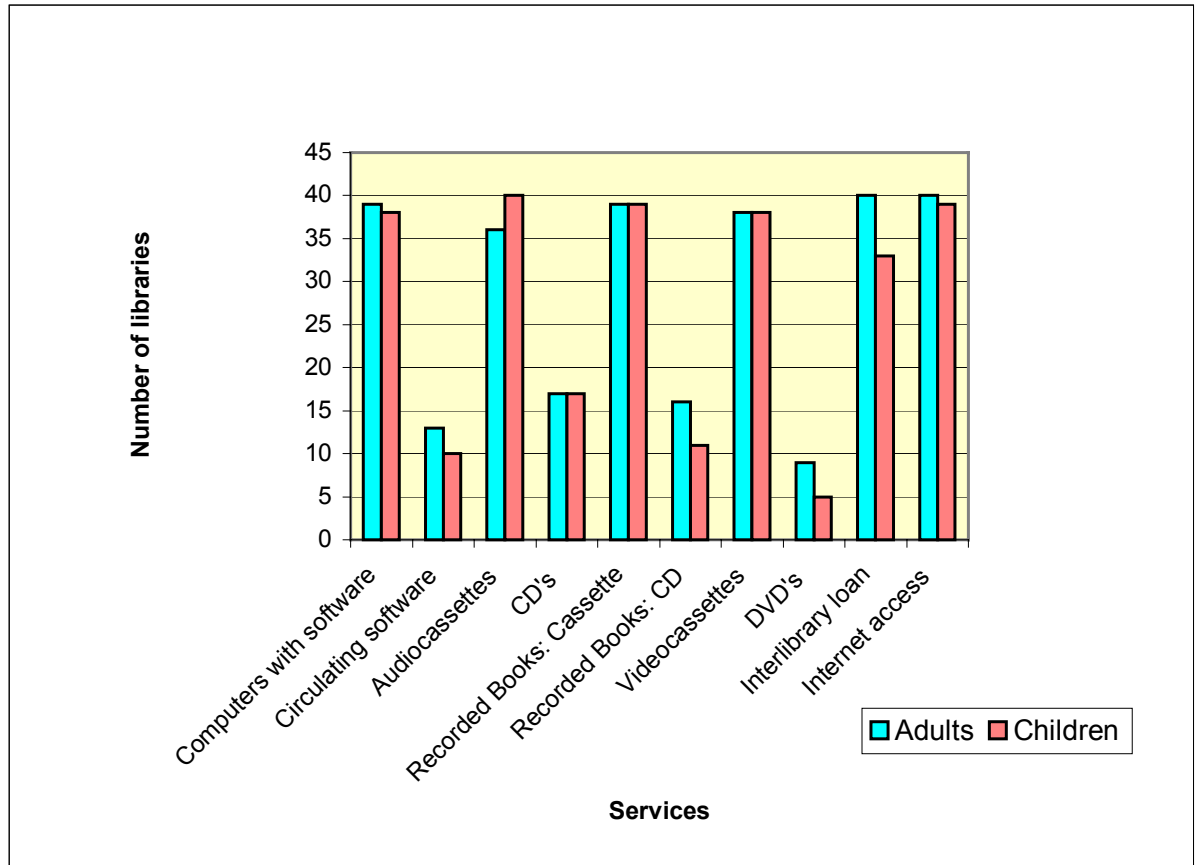
Twenty-seven libraries have computer terminals with Internet access in the main library children's area. Some of the remaining libraries are small buildings with no separate children's area. There are seventeen libraries which have terminals designated for children in branches. In one library, it is not Internet-accessible. In eighteen libraries, branches do not have computers designated for children's use.

The question about monitoring Internet use was made somewhat moot by the state filtering legislation passed in 2001. At the time of the survey, fourteen libraries were using filtering software for children; twenty-seven libraries required parent supervision; and in twenty-five libraries, staff monitored Internet use. Nine libraries required parents to sign a permission form for children to use the computers, and one used a security officer as a monitor. Twenty-four libraries allowed children to use e-mail, and fourteen libraries allowed them to use chat rooms.

Children use library computers for a variety of reasons, including homework and other research, fun and entertainment, and personal uses.

How Children Use the Internet in Public Libraries
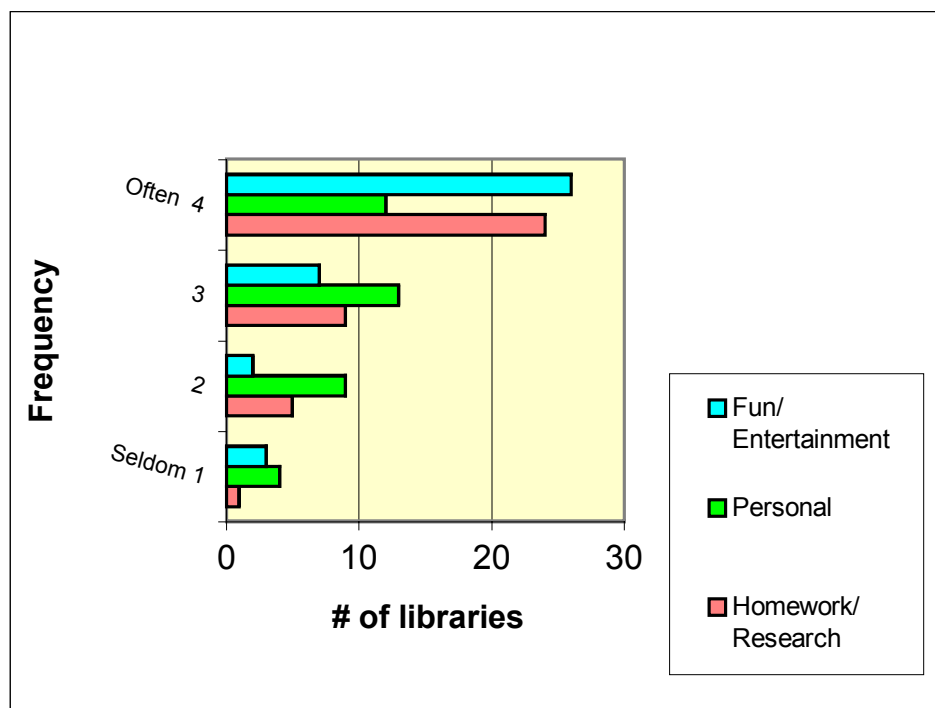
This graph shows that, in the opinion of staff, children use computers often, and the use is split fairly evenly between entertainment and homework use. Sixty percent of the libraries reported that children used the computers often. Several indicated that software received through the Gates Foundation grants was also heavily used and often more popular than the Internet. Two-thirds of the libraries require parents to sit with their children when they use the Internet.

Clearly the availability of computers, software, and the Internet is changing the ways children use the library. The new technology has required additional supervision and new policies. Since the survey was done, a legislative proviso has required filtering on most library computers.

Reference Services for Children

Twenty-eight library systems have separate reference collections for children, at least in the main library. Thirteen also have separate reference collections in at least their larger branches. Twelve libraries, mostly smaller ones, have all the reference materials shelved together.

In twenty main libraries, the children's services staff provides reference service for children. In seven of these libraries, branch children's services staff provides reference assistance for children. In four main libraries, reference service for children is provided by the reference staff; and in eight main libraries, it is provided by circulation staff. Only seven library systems report that children's services staff is available to do children's reference in branches. In most branch libraries, reference service for children is provided by reference (3) or circulation staff (13) or some combination of the two. There are many single person branches in the state where one person does everything.

## Programs for Children and Parents in South Carolina Public Libraries

Programming for children and their parents is an important part of the responsibilities of children's services. During the last dozen years, the amount and variety of programs offered to children have increased significantly in many public libraries. This increase reflects the addition of programs for parents and toddlers, parents and babies, as well as increased programming for teens (middle school and up), which is often offered by the children's department.

The chart on the next page shows the variety and amount of programming being offered by the state's public libraries.

Special programs include puppet programs, plays, pajama times, family nights, book discussion groups, programs for homeschool children, storytellers, community festivals and arts events, and homework centers.

In twenty-one library systems, staff from the main library do programs in branches. In an equal number of libraries, branch staff members do their own programs. In three libraries, programs are done by an extension children's librarian; and in two, it varies from branch to branch. All of the libraries with branches replied that they coordinated programs among the libraries in the system.

Programs Provided by Children's Services
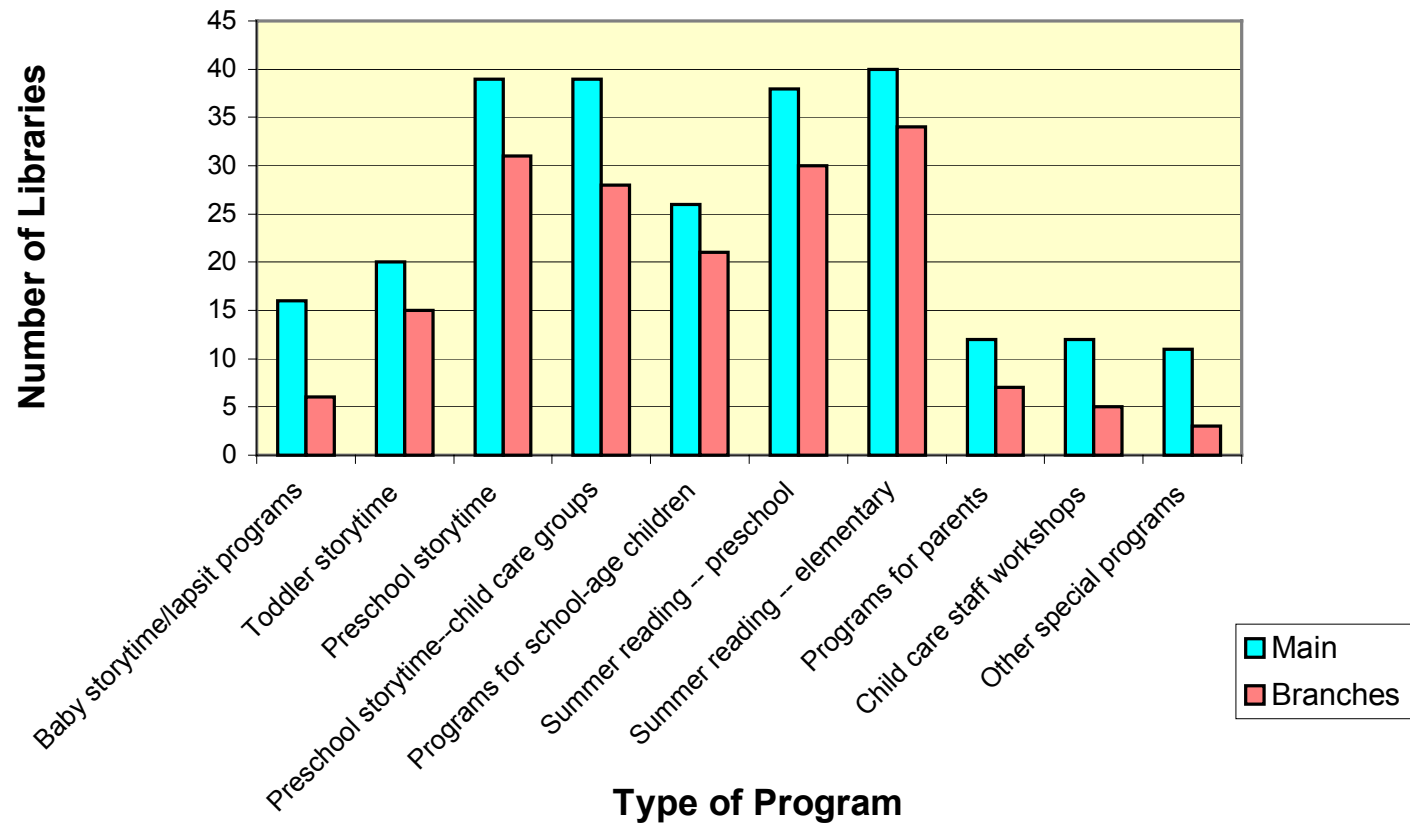
Public libraries are often understaffed, and thirty-two of the public libraries use volunteers in providing services to children to supplement what staff can do. Volunteers perform a variety of tasks such as assisting with the summer vacation reading program, including registration (10), programming (10), routine background tasks (7), updating storytime kits and other materials (1), program support (14), helping with homework center (2), child care storytimes (1), shelving and straightening up (6), patron assistance (2), and stuffing baby packets (1).

Service to child care centers continues to increase, and libraries serve these children and the adults who work with them in a variety of ways.
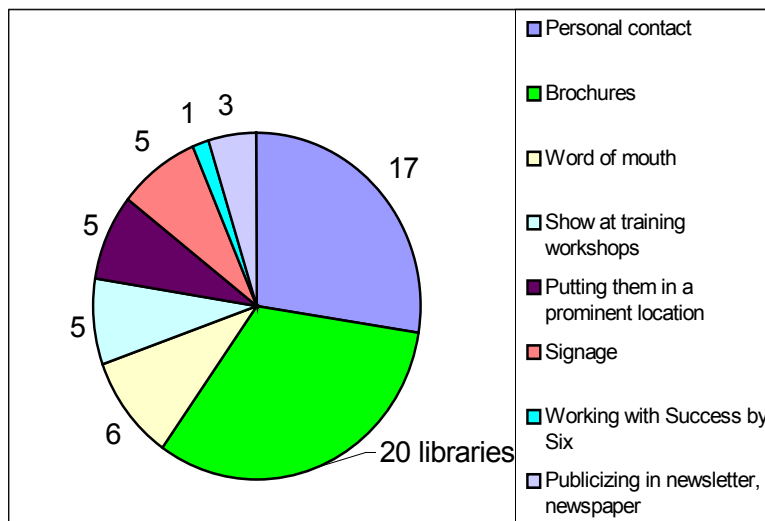
Services to Child Care Centers

Types of Services	Number of Libraries
Programs at the library	38
Story programs at child care centers	29
Rotating book deposit collections	16
Story/book kits	13
Bookmobile	10
Training workshops	2
Deposit collections	1
Gather materials for teachers	1
Teacher library card	1
Summer reading program	1
Getting State Library early childhood videos for teachers	2

More than two libraries get training videotapes for teachers, but this is generally done through interlibrary loan rather than the children's department.

Several years ago, the Association of Public Library Administrators received a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant from the State Library to provide collections of books about early childhood, curriculum, and other topics of interest to teachers of young children. Twenty-one of the libraries said these were well used; eighteen said they were somewhat well used; and no one indicated that they were not being used. Twenty-four of the libraries shelve these books in the children's area, where teachers and parents can find them easily when they bring children to the library. Eleven shelve them in the general nonfiction collection; and in two libraries, their location varies based on the size of the branch.

Public libraries have promoted these resource books in a variety of ways. Eleven libraries reported that their promotion of the books was weak, and one said that moving them to a different location increased use of the books.

Promotion of Early Childhood Teacher Resource Books

Legend:
- Personal contact
- Brochures
- Word of mouth
- Show at training workshops
- Putting them in a prominent location
- Signage
- Working with Success by Six
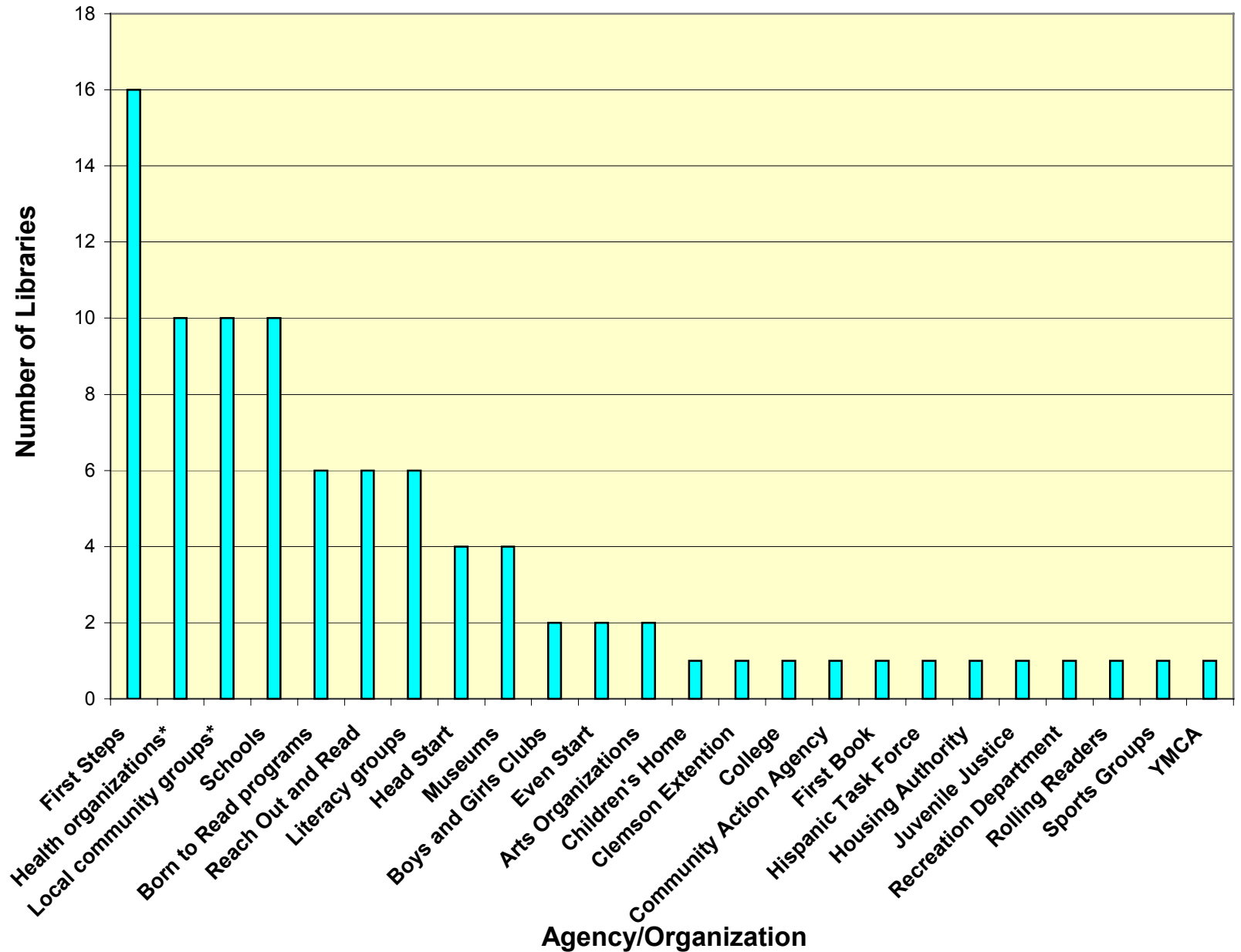- Publicizing in newsletter, newspaper

Community Outreach

It used to be that many children's librarians had limited contact with any other agencies working with children, but that is no longer true. Well before the First Steps to School Readiness initiative, generally known as First Steps, began, many libraries were working with other community agencies as a way to reach children and families and advocate for the library's role in early literacy and other childhood issues. Involvement began for many libraries with outreach to child care centers and has gradually expanded to working with a variety of agencies and organizations. (See chart on next page.)

Public libraries have a natural connection to schools since they serve as a resource for students to get books to read and resources for school assignments and projects. Thirty-seven libraries reported having class visits to the library, and thirty-three do school visits. However, some libraries do more, including:

- Serving on the school district planning committee.
- Attending the district media specialists meetings.
- Planning book discussions with the school.
- Applying for grants to develop cooperative efforts with local schools.
- Making presentations at PTO meetings.

Agencies and Organizations Working with Libraries

Bar chart showing Number of Libraries (y-axis, 0 to 18) by Agency/Organization (x-axis):

- First Steps: 16
- Health organizations*: 10
- Local community groups*: 10
- Schools: 10
- Born to Read programs: 6
- Reach Out and Read: 6
- Literacy groups: 6
- Head Start: 4
- Museums: 4
- Boys and Girls Clubs: 2
- Even Start: 2
- Arts Organizations: 2
- Children's Home: 1
- Clemson Extention: 1
- College: 1
- Community Action Agency: 1
- First Book: 1
- Hispanic Task Force: 1
- Housing Authority: 1
- Juvenile Justice: 1
- Recreation Department: 1
- Rolling Readers: 1
- Sports Groups: 1
- YMCA: 1

- Having joint in-service workshops.
- Doing story times at Saturday schools.
- Working with schools to develop the summer reading list for students.

Public libraries utilize schools to promote programs, especially the summer vacation reading program. They make school visits to promote the program, publicize the program through the schools, and use schools as a way to distribute awards.

A few libraries have found that technology has opened up a new way of communication when they were able to sign on to a local school district's media specialist listserv. This enabled them to keep abreast of what was happening in the school and they are able to use the listserv to promote the public library and its activities.

All public libraries are involved with the First Steps to School Readiness initiative because the legislation mandates library representation on county boards. Twenty-six of the libraries said they were very involved, and thirteen reported that they were somewhat involved. At the time of the survey, twenty-three libraries were represented on the county board by the library director. Eleven were represented by the children's librarian/coordinator. Three were represented by other staff members. Four libraries had staff members who had been elected officers of the local board of directors. Comments indicated that involvement required hard work and a significant amount of time. However, thirty-one public libraries felt it had already benefited the library in terms of grants, visibility, and recognition of the library's role in early childhood development and literacy. It has given the library the opportunity to learn about community resources and needs, as well as to increase awareness of the needs of the library.

The Future

The survey asked libraries what challenges children's services faces in the next five years. Responses can be broken down into six categories: facilities, staff, technology, collections, outreach, programming.

Three libraries identified facility needs. One said the system needs to expand all of its facilities. Two others mentioned inadequate space for children's programming in either the headquarters or branches.

Additional staff is needed to meet both children's information and programming needs. One library pointed out that additional staff is needed just to maintain current levels of service, because of the time-consuming aspects of technology. Staff needs to be available to help children find information and books they will enjoy reading.

An increasing demand for programming and outreach services in the community also has created a need for additional staff in both headquarters and branch libraries. One library felt there was a need for an additional professional librarian to work with children. Another felt that children's services needed to be made a priority in the library's branches.

It is without a doubt true that children's librarians are being asked to juggle more and more hats. It used to be that libraries offered preschool story hours. Now many offer separate programs for parents and babies and for toddlers, as well as numerous programs for child care centers either in the library or at the child care facility. It is a real challenge to add additional programming without new resources and staff.

Challenges

The survey asked what challenges faced children's services in the next five years.

Planning and budgeting to meet needs for services to children is a continuing challenge. One library mentioned the need to provide the same level of quality services system-wide. Another mentioned the need for the head of children's services to communicate with the director and to prepare informational reports for the board and governing authorities to justify the need for more training, support, and staff. Increased funding is a need across the state in order to keep up with the need for more books and other materials, additional programs, and more staff. One library reported that it is seeing increased support for the library from community leaders. A couple of libraries indicated that there is a decrease in the child population in their county, which means a higher cost per child to provide services.

Adequate staff generally tends to be a concern for public libraries, and it is often a difficult one to address with local governing authorities. Technology has resulted in increased demands on staff to assist and monitor use. The demands for programming, especially outreach programming, create the need for additional staff as well. When the last survey was done in 1992, toddler programs were just beginning to be offered by a few libraries. Now, in most medium and large library systems, staff do separate baby, toddler, and preschool storytimes as well as more book programs than ever for child care centers—both in the library and at the child care facility. Libraries also said they needed more staff to answer children's requests for information as well as for readers' advisory work just to maintain the present level of service. One library said they needed additional professional staff to work with children. Two also commented on the increasing demands for services for children in branches, making it important to work to make children's services in branches more of a priority.

Collections, even though they are the backbone of library service, also remain a challenge. Time and money make it difficult to keep the children's collection current, updated, and appealing to children. Again, other available sources of entertainment make it more important than ever that library books be inviting to children, both in appearance and content. The growing Hispanic population means that Spanish language materials must be added as well. Book budgets often do not keep up with the rise in cost of materials.

Technology has led to a whole new set of challenges. Training to improve skills with technology, as well as keeping staff up to date, is always needed. It is a challenge to stay abreast of new Internet resources for research and all that is new on the children's databases from DISCUS. Librarians see the need to play a role in helping children learn to be proficient users of technology. Some indicated they needed more terminals to reduce waiting time. Filtering of the Internet is also still an issue for children's librarians. One library said that it is a challenge for the library to compete with the barrage of other types of media appealing to children.

Programming has, in many libraries, expanded over the last ten years. Three libraries mentioned an increased demand for more programs for different age groups, without a corresponding increase in staff, but this is impacting libraries across the state. The addition of programming aimed at babies and toddlers, the growth of summer reading, and the desire to better serve middle and high school youth have placed additional demands on staff.

Larger systems have moved in the direction of hiring a teen or young adult librarian. In most medium-size and smaller libraries, if anything is done for teens, it is provided by the children's services staff. They see that older children and teens don't come to the library as often if there is nothing special for them. At the same time, program attendance for the traditional preschool story hour aimed at ages three to five involves more and more children from child care programs because fewer children are home with a parent during the day. Many libraries offer after-school or weekend programs for elementary age children to keep them coming to the library, but face the challenge of competing with sports, homework, and after-school activities. One library reported that their schools were moving one by one to year-round schooling, which has the potential of greatly affecting the summer reading program.

Outreach is taking on a more and more important and time-consuming role in the library's services to children. There seems to be an ever-increasing demand for services to children in child-care programs. The change in the law outlawing use of vans to transport children is affecting the ability of child-care programs to bring children to the library. Other challenges include providing information access for children with social, economic, and cultural barriers, such as the rapidly growing Hispanic population. Finding time to develop partnerships with community agencies is also a concern. Library representatives to the First Steps county

boards have found it to be very time-consuming. In addition, libraries are more and more aware of the need to develop relationships with other community agencies and organizations to increase awareness of the important role that public libraries play in areas such as parent education and reading readiness.

Promotion of library services and special activities is always a challenging issue. Libraries mentioned the need to promote services to an increasingly diverse population. They want to attract more people to the library, but face the challenge of keeping the library at the forefront of the community as an information resource at a time when people are relying more on the computer and the Internet.

Space needs were a concern for eight libraries. One library mentioned the need to expand facility size system-wide. Others mentioned the need for a larger auditorium/meeting room in the main library or more space for children's services in library branches.

Additional services libraries would like to offer

Even though children's librarians are often already stretched to the limits they are always thinking about ways to extend services and involve children in reading activities. Across the state libraries listed many additional services they would like to be able to offer including:

Note: The number at the end of the line indicates the number of libraries who listed that service.

For Children

- Baby and toddler programs
- More toddler programs in branches
- Lapsit programs for babies up to 18 months (7)
- More evening and weekend programs (7)
- Programs for parents (5)
- Programming for older children, ages 6-11 (4)
- Family (parent or grandparent and child) programs (4)
- More family night, after-school programs (3)
- Family literacy and ESL programs
- Spanish storytime
- Increase use of puppetry in programs
- Programs for children with disabilities
- Book discussion group
- More booktalking
- More activities at the library to bring children in regularly

For Teens
- Teen/Young Adult programming (7)
- Teen web page

- Middle school programming
- Teen advisory board
- Booktalking at middle and high schools

Library Services
- Additional services at branches
- Open large branches on Sunday
- Have consistent hours for all locations
- Homework center (4)
- Expanded volunteer program
- Improved computer services
- More computers for children
- Computer workshops for children or for children and parents (3)
- Computer classes
- Updated web site
- Promote new joint school/public library card
- Expanded evening/weekend hours
- More AV for children (2)
- Eliminate fines for children

Outreach
- Increased outreach (5)
- Expanded outreach to Hispanic (3)
- Expanded outreach to African American communities (3)
- Small branch depositories in rural areas
- Develop more collaborative relations with other agencies
- More contact/develop relationship with media specialists
- More school visits
- Expanded services to child care centers (12)
- Book deposits for child care centers (11)
- Outreach programs from bookmobile
- Story van to reach child care centers
- Resources for child care centers—e.g., die-cut machine, paper cutter, laminator
- More programs for child care centers (2)
- Workshops for child care staff (5)
- More staff to take programs out to children

Staffing
- Children's librarian at each site
- Additional staff at branches
- Increased training for Youth Services librarians
- Training for all staff on the child as a library user

Other
- Expanded space with separate area for children and teens

- Public performance rights on more feature length videos
- Statewide advertising encouraging families to read together
- Summer Reading camp
- Adopt-a-Shelf program

COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS BY THE
YOUTH SERVICES CONSULTANT

In the ten years since the last survey of children's services in South Carolina, there have been significant changes in public library services to children in the state. The three most significant changes have been in the areas of staffing, programming and outreach, and technology.

Twenty-four (62%) of the public libraries in the state now have at least one children's librarian with an M.L.S. degree. This is a 25 percent increase. In addition, several of the larger libraries have several professional children's librarians on the staff not only in the main library, but also in the medium- and large-size branches. This is at least partially the result of new larger buildings and increased demands for services. Increasingly, children's librarians are also representing the library in work with other community agencies and organizations that focus on children and families, where they must interact with professionals from other fields. Library staff with a Master's Degree generally are grounded in the philosophy and rationale behind quality services for children and bring planning and evaluation skills necessary for evaluation and implementation of services. They often see programming within the context of total services to children and not as the only significant activity of the children's department. The School of Library and Information Science in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of South Carolina has a distance education program that makes it easier to obtain a degree by providing easy access to a degree program with courses offered by distance education. While students may miss the formal and informal direct interaction with faculty and students, this option does allow more people to earn their degree. South Carolina public libraries also have excellent pre-professional staff members who provide quality service to children and their families.

In 1992, programs for toddlers were a relatively new service. Now for many libraries they are a regular part of the programming schedule. Forty percent of public libraries offer storytimes for babies and a parent. At the other end of the age span, more libraries are developing specific services, collections, and programming aimed at teens. The expansion of services to new age groups is a very positive development, but in most libraries, it has not resulted in additional staff to provide the service. This has made it necessary to take the time for programs away from other important responsibilities such as covering the public service children's area, helping children and parents find books and other materials, and collection development, all core responsibilities of a children's librarian. In many libraries there is little, if any, time to spend learning and evaluating the collection. In working with children, it is important to keep up with the literature in order to help children find books they want to read, but it seems that children's staff have less and less time to do this. At some point, if there is no additional staff, libraries will have to decide what their priorities are, and limit

further expansion of services, or eliminate some service when new services are added.

A perfect example of expanding services is outreach into the community, which continues to increase. There was a trend for a number of years for child-care centers to bring children to the library for story programs, but new transportation regulations are making this more difficult for child-care programs. As a result the trend is once again tipping toward library staff going out to child-care centers, which is more time intensive. It also means that the children may not get to the public library at all. A number of libraries now do programs for parents and training for child-care staff as well. It may be that libraries may need to move in the direction of offering more training for child care staff in reading to children effectively and in selecting books to read instead of trying to go to large numbers of child care centers. In addition, many libraries are more involved with early literacy projects in their counties through programs such as the First Steps to School Readiness Initiative and Success by Six. These partnerships can be very beneficial, but they can also be very time-consuming. Setting priorities is becoming a necessity.

The most dramatic change has come from computers, databases, and the Internet, not only because technology brings many new resources to libraries of all sizes, but also because it brings many new challenges. Contrary to the popular wisdom that computers would reduce the need for staff, in libraries, the effect has been the opposite. Helping people find what they need, monitoring use, answering questions, and troubleshooting computer problems all add to the workload of all library staff, including those in children's services. Restrictive policies on independent use by children make sense in terms of protecting young people, but it limits their access to technology, especially for children without computers at home.

Salaries continue to be inadequate for both M.L.S. librarians and those without library degrees. This is true across the board in many public libraries in our state, but library administrators find that schools, with higher salaries and a shorter work year, compete with public libraries for staff wanting to work with young people. Hiring and maintaining professional staff for public libraries is becoming more and more of a challenge, particularly in more rural areas. Salaries must be addressed if public libraries are to be able to hire and retain librarians with a specialty in work with children or teens.

The increase in attention to providing services to teens is one of the very positive developments over the last several years. The trend of inter-filing teen or young adult fiction with the adult fiction is reversing. More libraries are setting up a teen corner with comfortable furniture and a collection that focuses on titles with high appeal and heavy use of paperbacks. Graphic novels are beginning to be a popular part of library teen collections.

The beginning of the twenty-first century is an exciting but challenging time for library service to children. Shrinking budgets may force prioritization of services. Working and networking with other agencies that work with and for children will likely become even more important if libraries want to increase awareness of our role in the lives of children and families and if we want to develop community support.

Public libraries in many communities still struggle to reach certain segments of the population, who may have transportation problems and schedules that do not mesh with library hours. In addition, a certain segment of the population may not feel comfortable in libraries. It is very important that libraries continue and even expand efforts to reach out to low income citizens. They must work to have collections and staff reflect the racial and ethnic makeup of the communities they serve.

Staff members working with children continue to need training opportunities to expand skills and to get re-energized with new ideas. They need continuing education not only in the area of services to children, but also in technology, supervision, and other aspects of library service. They need opportunities to share information and ideas with each other and with others working with children in different fields. The State Library provides some training opportunities, but children's librarians should be encouraged also to seek continuing education from other sources. The Youth Services Section of the South Carolina Library Association and other library organizations, as well *the Panning for Gold* workshops offered by the University of South Carolina's School of Library and Information Science are good sources for librarians. Children's librarians may also find that attending early childhood association or school library media conferences are a source for new ideas and knowledge. The library may also want to encourage capable staff to earn their Master's Degree in Library and Information Science.

As a former children's librarian and in my role as the Youth Services Consultant, I firmly believe that the children's services job is one of the most demanding in the library. I have never known a good children's librarian who does not carry work home, whether it is planning a preschool program, reading children's novels, or doing materials selection. Children's services staff, in general, plan and do more programming than other staff. They do more outreach into the community, and provide a great deal of direct assistance in finding materials for both recreational and school use. They are expected to read and know the collection and to relate well to people of all ages from infants on up. Many supervise multiple employees. A good children's librarian has learned to be a good planner and time and people manager. Many children's librarians really enjoy their work and have a real passion for what they are doing. As a result, they may be reluctant to move into supervisory and administrative positions, where their skills and ability to juggle multiple tasks are needed. I admire the hard work and dedication of staff working with children in South Carolina and believe that each of them is making a positive

contribution to children and families that they serve. I feel privileged to be able to work with them to make service to children and youth in South Carolina the best it can be.